Ports implement development plans

As the cruise industry has grown, new ports have been added to itineraries and older ones have been expanded in response to increased calls. The growth in size of post-Panamax ships beyond 300 meters and 3,500 passengers has also driven new port development and renovation. A few years ago, the Queen Mary 2 and the Voyager-class ships were the planning benchmarks. Today, they are the Oasis of the Seas and her sister Allure of the Seas. In some cases, the cruise port is the locomotive for the area's tourism development, while in others it is part of an integrated tourism or logistics development plan. Yet in others still, it’s a key component in maintaining the port’s maritime competitive advantage. Let’s take a look at some of the largest projects.

By Andrew O. Coggins Jr.

Cruise port projects serving as tourism locomotives can be found in Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, The Hague, Hamburg, Lisbon, and Falmouth, Jamaica. Dubai has actively been pursuing the cruise industry since the late 1990s. Its efforts have resulted in a steady increase in ship calls and several homeported vessels over the winter season. A key factor in this success has been the cruise terminal at Port Rashid. Opened in 2001, the terminal has hosted ships as large as the Queen Mary 2. In order to handle both the increase in ship calls and ship size, a series of new terminals are being planned as part of the Mina Rashid reclamation project. In 2008, there were over 80 calls. Both Costa Cruises and AIDA Cruises will homeport ships there this winter and Royal Caribbean International will bring in its Rhapsody of the Seas for 2010.

Hong Kong needs desperately a new cruise facility for the megaships.
Growth in Asia

Singapore's award-winning, highly successful cruise center has been in operation for years. The increase in Singapore's popularity as both a homeport and port-of-call has resulted in congestion problems. Additionally, air draft restrictions caused by Sentosa Island's iconic cable car have prevented the latest generation of cruise ships from docking there, and turning-basin restrictions require large ships such as the ms SuperStar Virgo to back in to the terminal. A two-berth cruise facility is included in the new Marina South Integrated Resort. Scheduled to open in 2010, the facility will be able to handle two Oasis-class ships simultaneously. There will be no air-draft or turning-basin restrictions. Plus, the new facility will relieve congestion problems during peak periods. This is the first step in a long-term master plan for Marina South culminating in up to eight cruise berths.

Hong Kong's pioneering Ocean Terminal has been eclipsed by the growth in cruise ship size. Post-Panamax ships exceed the terminal's structural capability and must berth at the container terminal or anchor out. This fall, the government announced that it would undertake the construction of a new two-berth facility. Located at the seaward end of the runway of the former Kai Tak Airport, the terminal will be able to accommodate Oasis-class ships and serve as both a homeport and port-of-call. The new terminal is crucial to Hong Kong's drive to become a major cruise hub. The first berth is planned for completion in 2013.

Rising above the North Bund waterfront like an airship, Shanghai's recently completed International Cruise Terminal makes an impressive sight. Well sited on the Huangpu River, the terminal is within walking distance of the Bund and the Nanjing Road Pedestrian Mall. Though the air draft of the downstream Yangpu Bridge is a generous 52 meters, this has already been exceeded by some of the latest Panamax ships, thereby forcing them to dock at the container terminal. An additional cruise terminal is planned as part of a port development project in the Baoshan District to the north of Shanghai proper. Located on the Wusong estuary, the port will be able to handle several of the latest generation of cruise ships simultaneously. Plans call for completion by 2010 in time for Shanghai's World Expo.

Developments in Europe

A homeport cruise terminal is the centerpiece of an outer harbor development project at Scheveningen in The Hague, the Netherlands. The terminal will be part of a marina and fishing harbor development project. The inclusion of mixed use urban development will depend on which of three scenarios are chosen by the Municipal Council in early 2009.

Hamburg, Germany, is a city with a long and famous passenger-shipping heritage and a population that will line the banks of the Elbe for kilometers to watch the likes of the ss Norway, ms Queen Elizabeth 2, and Queen Mary 2 arrive and depart. Hamburg included a Cruise Center in its Hafencity development in its old warehouse district. Currently operating out of two terminal buildings, Hamburg's Cruise Center will get a new terminal in 2011. Final plans for Hafencity include a 420-room adjacent hotel. In 2007, the state government approved plans for an additional berth at the site of the England ferry terminal in Altona. Intended for operation next year, the terminal will accommodate ships up to 300 meters long. Both the Hafencity and Altona terminals are well placed in relation to public transportation and city sites. These projects will increase Hamburg's competitive advantage as a homeport and port-of-call.

Portugal is pushing ahead with several cruise terminal projects in a move to increase ship calls. The Gateway of the Sea in Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel Island in the Azores recently opened. Lisbon intends to complete its Santa Apolonia Cruise Terminal later this year. When completed, it will be able to take as many as five cruise ships simultaneously. Serving as the entry point for northern Portugal, the port of Leixões, near Porto, will complete its new cruise pier by 2011. The full terminal should be ready by 2012/2013 and will be able to berth three ships simultaneously and handle ships up to 300 meters long. As some ports have increased in pop-
The first stage of new cruise terminal in St Petersburg was opened on September 10, 2008. At the press conference, from left, St Petersburg Governor Valentina Matviienko, Vitaliy Yuthilin from the Association of Commercial Sea Ports and Marine Facade President Shvakat Kary-Niyazov.

ularity, they've been forced to expand their berthing capacity. Foremost among these is St Petersburg in Russia. Located on Vasilyevsky Island, the new cruise and ferry port will have seven berths. The first two were inaugurated in September 2008. Completion is scheduled for 2011. St. Petersburg's cruise trade has grown with the increase in the Baltic cruise market. It is one of the few cruise destinations worldwide with strong demand for overnight stays. This massive reclamation project will greatly increase St. Petersburg's capacity to meet this demand and develop much-needed new housing and commercial space for the city.

The Port of Barcelona is Europe's top cruise port with 1,765,838 cruise passengers in 2007. More than half of these were turn-around passengers. The port ranks tenth worldwide. The rapid growth in its cruise business since the 1990s, encouraged by the use of cruise ships as hotels during the 1992 Olympic Games, spurred Barcelona to keep pace by adding new terminals and renovating older ones. There are currently four terminals along the Adossat wharf. Terminal A was demolished in 2006 and recently reopened capable of accommodating megaships. Terminal B was opened in 2005. Terminal C has been recently renovated. Opened in 2007, Palacrueros, designated Terminal D, was built by Costa for its Barcelona operations. The North and South Terminals, located at the World Trade Center, are a five-minute walk from the city center at Placa Colom. Terminal M is available for small ships and two ferry terminals can also be pressed into cruise service when needed. Barcelona sees itself as the "prime Euro Mediterranean logistics hub." Its strategic objective is to maintain that position. Cruise operations are part of that strategy and are specifically mentioned in the port's Second Strategic Plan 2003-2015. Continuing modernization of existing terminals and construction of new ones are helping Barcelona to reach this goal.

Work has recently begun on Southampton's fourth cruise terminal. As the "cruise capital of Northern Europe," the terminal will play a vital role in maintaining Southampton's competitive position. The terminal is result of a 20-year agree-

ment between Associated British Ports and Carnival UK. Located opposite the site of Southampton's iconic Ocean Terminal, the new terminal will be named after its illustrious predecessor when it opens in 2009. Venice is looking at an additional cruise terminal to accept ships up to 400 meters long as the number of post-Panamax ships operating in the Mediterranean increases.

Facilities in the Caribbean and North America

The increase in ship size also is behind Carnival Cruise Lines' recent renovations at the Port of Miami and expansion of Terminal 4 in Port Canaveral. Royal Caribbean and Broward County reached an agreement to expand Terminal 18 in Port Everglades, making it the world's largest cruise terminal handling the world's largest cruise vessels. Terminal 18 will be the home of the 5,400-passenger sister-ships the Oasis of the Seas and Allure of the Seas.

In the 1700s, Falmouth was the center of Jamaica's sugar and rum industry. The Port Authority of Jamaica will complete a new cruise terminal in 2010 in time to welcome the Oasis of the Seas. Able to host

Oasis of the Seas and her sister simultaneously, the project will offer a themed environment based on Falmouth's Georgian architecture and colonial heritage. It will add another destination to Jamaica's diverse tourism product.

New York City has recently completed renovation of the midtown Manhattan Cruise Terminal. Built in the early 1930s for the SS Normandie and other legendary liners, the three finger piers, 88, 90, and 92, that make up the Manhattan Cruise Terminal were renovated in the early 1970s. While the area, "Luxury Liner Row," piers 84 to 97, often hosted as many as seven or eight liners simultaneously during the 1950s and 1960s, the growth in ship size resulted in severe congestion by the late 1990s on heavy sailing days. Prompted by New York City's steady growth in cruise passenger numbers and homeporting agreements with Carnival Corporation and Norwegian Cruise Line, renovations were begun in 2004 and recently completed. These included widening the pier aprons to conform to current provisioning practices, separating passenger flow with embarking passengers processed on the second floor while disembarking passengers and their luggage are handled on the first floor, providing new more flexible gangways, and improving street access and traffic flow. While only three Panamax or post-Panamax ships can berth simultaneously under the new configuration, the Ports of New York/New Jersey are able to handle up to six such ships when the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal at Red Hook and Royal Caribbean's Cape Liberty Cruise Port at Bayonne are taken into consideration.

All in all, the cruise industry is either the thrust behind or a significant component of these many infrastructure projects. Aside from the direct economic benefits during construction, the resulting projects will improve their location's competitive advantage and provide an enhanced experience for future cruise passengers for years to come.